Percussionists revive lost art

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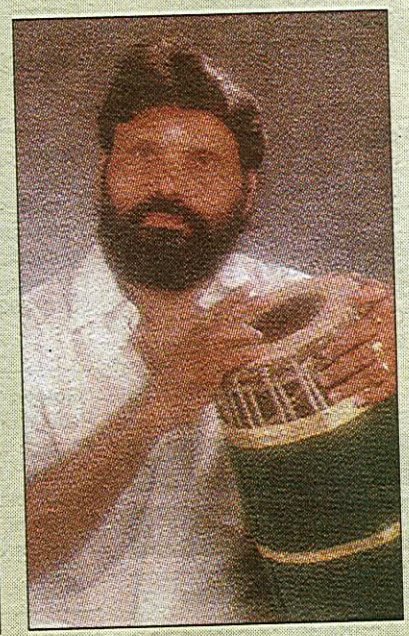
May we, with our ears, hear what is good
May we, with our eyes, see what is good
May our minds know each other
May our heart and soul be together

When Sanjeev Chimalgi, a student of TSN Percussive Arts Centre, all dressed in white and carrying a serene expressions on his face, began chanting out the vedic prayer (some lines of which are translated above) on stage at Shamukhananda hall on Saturday evening, the audience could not have asked for anything else.

It was a voice that brought divinity to almost everybody present there. The auditorium was packed with classical music lovers. The ladies were wearing *gajaras* in their buns and big *bindis* on their foreheads and gents mostly dressed in white kurta and pyjamas were seen speeding up their steps towards the hall.

The evening was dedicated to celebrating the 10th anniversary of the TSN's service to Carnatic music.



(Left) Dr L. Subramaniam, who performed at the 10th anniversary celebration of TSN Percussive Arts Centre; (right) Founder of the institute guru T.S. Nandkumar

About 80 students from the age of five to 60 years performed the *sruti sandhya*, a percussion ensemble on various instruments like mridangam, ghatam, kanjira, moorsing, konnakol, etc.

The evening also witnessed a grand violin recital in classical Carnatic style by music maestro Dr L. Subramaniam accompanied by the founder of TSN, T.S. Nandadumar and his senior students. The president of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha V. Shankar also graced the occasion.

As one of the students Subramanium Parameswaran, who has been with the institute since 1992, said: "Music sets me free. This was my first time performing on stage with such a large group. Since I was part of the coordinating committee, I know that it was difficult to control 80 students on stage. It takes a lot of effort to control such a sequence, which included seven formats of percussion instruments. It is one of the most unique and excellent concerts that I have participated in."

Guru T.S. Nandkumar said, "I realised that *konnakkol*, a composition of percussion, is vanishing. It is a lost art. Therefore, I started this institute 10 years ago to teach students this art form."

Congratulating Nandakumar on the occasion, Dr Subramaniam said, "I am proud of the work he is doing. His students have kept the flag flying high. The performance today was of the finest quality and keeps abreast the banner of fine Carnatic music."